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ABSTRACT

Semiotics is the scientific study of signs and sign functions. While semiotics has most often focused on human phenomena, it has been suggested that the field should be broadened to include elements of the system of signs from the entire continuum of living reality. Such an approach is to make explanatory in a relatively "universal" way what a classification of notions, principles, and procedures means for understanding the unique phenomenon of human semiosis. Semiotics is a unifying matrix that underlies most of the humanities and many of the social and behavioral sciences and impinges upon important segments of the hard sciences. One aspect of semiotics, which may be termed "semiolinguistics," pertains to intentionality with regard to the selection and application of linguistic structures and how the decision to communicate in language relates to the semiotic world. An analysis of Shakespeare's use of terms concerning fabric demonstrates the connection between an objective form and its subjectively experienced social function. Meaning may be understood as the product of the processes of symbolization achieved by a structure and formulation of rules. The semiotic approach mandates a politics of synthesis that allows for an ever more coherent level of analysis of human communication. (Thirty-one references are attached.) (SG)

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FROM CODPIECES TO SPOONERISMS: SEMIOLINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATION IN CULTURE

(an essay presented for the panel, Approaches to a Semiotics of Language Behavior, WSCA Annual Meeting, 1992, Boise, Idaho)

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Most generally, **Semiotics** is the scientific study of signs and sign functions. It includes the most characteristic operation of all living organisms--communication or the interchange of messages. If we might say, simply put, that communication consists in some sense in the moving of information from one place to another and one time to another and that effective communication requires the material presence of an object or entity which refers back to something other than itself, then an object or entity of this sort is a **sign.** The process of referring back, called a **sign process**, may take many forms. To a medical doctor, for instance, a given spot on an x-ray may signal or communicate the possibility of a tumor in a patient's lung; for a meteorologist, a rise in barometric pressure may provide a clue that communicates some aspect of the next day's weather; for an anthropologist, the verbal and nonverbal complex of reciprocal gift-giving reveals and communicates essential elements of the social organization of a people; to a political scientist, the perception and observation of some aspect of public comportment may signal or communicate a change in ideology; in a forensic and judicial setting, a fingerprint may lead to a communication that allows for the identification and conviction of a criminal; to a person face-to-face with a snarling dog, the snarling behavior may telegraph and communicate the strong possibility of the dog's intention to attack. . . Thus, we are led to say that semiotics is an interdisciplinary study which entails, comprehends, and informs itself of all conceivable message exchanges--all communications,

whether verbal or not, whether the interactants are humans or speechless creatures, or even whether the exchange is with or among such instruments as computers, or among living entities as diverse as plants or planets.

Traditionally and historically, the most formalized branch of semiotics has been one that examines and deals with human phenomena centrally, **i.e.**, linguistics or studies that we may term or categorize most generally as philosophy of language. Other programs, however, have been equally concerned with human communication by nonverbal means, including studies of facial expression, mutual gaze, gesture, and posture, as well as of sign languages, whether of the deaf, of aboriginal peoples, of monks, or as a part of the communicative behavior of animals.

Most recently, in an excellent little book, Basics of Semiotics (1990), a work that catalogues some quite old notions about **semiosis** (the process of signing) and dresses them in relatively novel clothing, John Deely makes a very strong case for broadening the base of semiotic study so that it inlcudes "zoosemiotics," "anthroposemiotics," "phytosemiotics," and "physiosemiotics." That is to say, Deely claims that the object of semiotic endeavor should be to cull common elements of the system of signs from the entire continuum and panorama of animate or living reality, from animal to human to plant to the whole of the physical environment respectively. This is to be done so as to make entirely explanatory in a broadened and relatively "universal" way, what a classification and ordering of notions, principles, and procedures means for understanding the unique phenomenon of human

semiosis.

Deely does not relate, as have so many semioticians, the subject matter of semiotics strictly to the patterns of cultural behavior but rather to the representation and interpretation of the communication of life forms in and of themselves. For those of us who deal with the "anthroposemiotic" rather principally and centrally, this suggests that the approach to understanding human communication systems and interpreting their significance and impact is more perfused with signs and broader and more synthetic than we might have guessed or ventured toward hitherto. If we take Deely's lead and (as Deely himself makes so clear throughout his book) the lead of the eminent American semiotician, Thomas Sebeok (1977, 1979, 1986), as well, semiotics, as a constitution of understandings, theories, beliefs, values, and techniques shared by an ever-increasing global community of scholars, may best be regarded as a unifying matrix which underlies most of the so-called humanities as well as many of the social and behavioral sciences. It also informs and impinges upon important segments of the behavioral sciences, such as psychological studies, and the hard sciences, such as biology and physics.

This is what Deely intends when he says:

> We will see that the origin of semiotics and the drawing of the line between human and other animals are of a piece, and that, at the same time, the origin of semiotics as the perspective proper to experience by that very fact extends the prospective knowledge [that] semiotics entails beyond

> the biological boundaries of specifically human animals to encompass all those communicative modalities upon which deployment and sustenance of specifically linguistic competence depend. (1990, 13)

Therefore, we may understand that the aim of even a relatively anthropocentric semiotics should be to uncover

> . . .the perspective proper to the sign according to the being and activity it reveals in the experience of each of us. As virtual to all experience, the actual perspective in question is, therefore, testable analytically by each reader [of this book]. Morevoer, it is rooted first of all in common experience, precisely as that experience reveals itself as a constructed network built over time both through the biological heritage of the animal species as such (in our case, the species **homo sapiens**) and through the individual experiences, whereby, atop the biological heritage, socialization and enculturation transpire. (1990, 14)

Thus, it seems to me that, more specifically for communication theorists who are, by definition, narrowly concerned with examining such human phenomena as language behavior and social interaction, semiotics is the general and universal theory and study of the notions, "sign" and "symbol," and how these notions figure prominently into an understanding of the phenomenology of things, artifacts, and events and into communicating the meaning of those things, artifacts, and events. From the relatively narrow view of

human communication, **semiotics** or, as it is sometimes referred to, **semiology**, then, is essentially the study of the signs and symbols that human beings use to represent reality, how these signs and symbols are understood in the world of experience both particularly, globally, and universally, and how human beings then make use of these signs and symbols to cope with and make sense of their reality and experience. Thus, for the communication studies person generally and, especially, for the language behavior and social interaction communication theorist, there can be a "semiotics" of subjects as diverse as political elections or flycasting, jokes or negotiations, dance or conversation, cinema or types of dress, circuses or cigarette ads. Indeed, I imply here that Semiotics, the science of signs and of the codes to understand them, has great applicability to many different areas of life--areas that are regularly and intimately examined by most if not all of the various communication disciplines; but, for the moment, I confine my comments and direct them to those of us in communication studies who deal directly with the particularities and peculiarites of language behavior and social interaction.

This leads me directly to a notion of what I call a linguistic semiotics or, more precisely, a "semiolinguistics." For more than a decade (**inter alia** 1981, 1986, 1990, 1992 forthcoming), I have gone forward with a notion that pertains to intentionality with regard to the selection and application of linguistic structures and how the decision to communicate in language, the human formal, abstract system of communication, is inextricably bound up with the

physical, psychological, functional, pragmatic, cultural universe--in essence, the semiotic world. I have attempted to show that, in the linguistic or verbal realm of human phenomena, human beings select structure and form in context, **i.e**, human beings signify in the totality of human experience, both narrowly defined culturally and socially, and broadly defined in some larger physical, universal sense. They do this, I have suggested, in order to achieve or attain to what I have called "meaningfulness," the means by which one arrives at or comes to terms with one's existence and by which one entertains some sense of explanation about that existence. For me, then, an understanding of what communication in human terms is gets wrung out of the notion that signs perfuse all, that the human being structures and applies those signs, and that the symbolic entity or semiotic that results in the application rests squarely in, nay more, is inextricably bound up with, a context and culture.

Over the years, whether my aim was to analyze the form and function of speech errors such as "spoonerisms" or "malaprops," whether it was to look at which kind of humor-evoking material might be taken as "funnier" in some sense, whether I described the origins, development, functioon, use and, thereby, the social and cultural significance of the "codpiece" or "bombast" by examining what William Shakespeare did with these terms in his plays, or whether I examined a presidential speech in order to claim that what emerged, through the semiolinguistic analysis I proposed, was an implicit understanding of the intentions of the author of that

speech with regard to the events of the day, I was grappling with and becoming ever more intrigued with the essential "by-product" of this type of linguistic, semiotic, structural, applied analysis. This was the realization and comprehension that a semiotic analysis of linguistic form and structure with an emphasis on the decision to communicate by means of selection and application of structure leads logically to **a heightened and more intense understanding of the content of the whole from the view of the communicator.**

But the understanding, I hasten to add, is never the thing itself. In other words, by analyzing linguistic structure and the application of that structure within a context or environment and by drawing together the semiotic outcomes, that is to say, by constructing the semiotic network or "web," we are indeed provided with a **simulacrum**, the image of the thing. However, it is just that--an image or refraction of the phenomenal whole. Nevertheless, even this refractive view, this simulacrum, that the semiolinguistic interpretation or representation of a world refashions and entails, is about as close (or as far) as we may approach in understanding the form, or what has been called the "signifier" and the content, what has been called the "signified."

As a partial demonstration of the above, I present to you an abridged and summary version of a semiolinguistic analysis of a few terms in Shakespeare's plays that pertain to "fabric" (**cf.** Owens and Harris, 1992, in press). First of all, let me note that, in every age, human beings have utilized textiles and other materials to construct adornment or apparel. The adornment or apparel,

"dress," becomes a means of symbolically stating aspects of, conditions of, issues in, or beliefs about their culture with particular reference to personal, social, political, economic, technological, and artistic situations. This is done either directly, through the signifying act of wearing of clothing or using materials to construct clothing, or indirectly, through referring to dress and the materials that constitute that dress, by means of the symbols human beings create linguistically.

In The Fashion System (1967/1983), Roland Barthes, referring to the relationship between the term for the actual, physical, relatively unsymbolized object--the signifier--, in this case, "clothing" or "material," and the meaning-laden, relatively symbolized (semiotic) entity--the signified--, in this case, "dress" or "textile," explained the relation between actual apparel and written apparel as parallel to that between speech and language. Generally speaking, then, Barthes implied that the linguistic term for the actual apparel or material is action, equivalent to speech and relatively devoid of meaning, and that written apparel or material is institution, equivalent to language, fully symbolized, culturally bound, and, therefore, laden with meaning.

It is to the more complex, symbolic approach to a statement of the human condition via the use of terms for materials/fabric (here, textiles) which meaningfully constitute dress that this kind of study is directed. Primarily, the aim is to identify, list, categorize, describe, compare, contrast, and analyze the literal and figurative terms referring to textiles used in dress. To

clarify, as Barthes claims, the very act of using these terms (his action) does indeed constitute a signifying. In other words, the terms set a semiotic process in motion that results in the signified. The process is a representation (his institution) of the intimate connection between language and culture. The creation of a simulacrum constitutes a phenomenal, communicative, semiotic whole.

A term, for example, such as flax, more or less denotes the object itself; however, upon its use in such a phrase as ". . . no more be hid in him than fire in flax," it constitutes or institutes a process that weds language to and binds language communicatively into culture. It, therefore, is resymbolized or takes on, in its institution, all of the intricate, intertwined, inextricable connections, associations, references, allusions, and the like that language, now fully specified in its cultural context, must assume.

Although the 1992 study is restricted to textiles, it immediately demonstrates the communicative significance of such an approach. It is consonant with Roach-Higgins and Eicher's (1989) conceptual definition of dress that links the objective form of dress (and thereby its materials/fabrics) with its subjectively-experienced social function as a means of communication. Accordingly, dress [read "materials"] is defined as an assemblage of objectively describable body. . . supplements that are used by a human being, thoughout the lifespan, as aids in establishing a subjective sense of identity and self, for self, and communicating the aspects of this subjective identity to others.

From this perspective, dress [materials] is a "package" of form and associated meaning that connects each individual to socially created, modified, and perpetuated cultural patterns. It is thus contended that if attention is paid to certain aspects of terms of and references to materials/fabrics, primarily textiles, and if a strict linguistic analysis is performed on these items, comparing and contrasting their relatively direct, relatively less complex use with their much more complex metaphoric and indirect use, then what results is an interpretation of the discourse that allows greater understanding of the meaning of the plays in the context of the author's time. In much the same way as the "biome" is an ecological entity which allows for and supports the emergence of a community of well-developed and related biological phenomena, such a package of form and associated menaing constitutes what I might term the **semiome**, a sign entity which allows for and supports the emergence of a community of well-developed understandings which connect each individual to socially created, modified, and perpetuated cultural patterns.

Moreover, if the Bard's words are subjected to a thoroughgoing, strict linguistic analysis of the structure and application of the language, although what will be revealed is not representative of or a reaction to the exact, actual state of affairs, it still, refractively, is a semiotic--a symbolic and microcosmic view of how Shakespeare perceived and, thereby, communicated his world. That is to say, it is a **simulacrum** or image of the thing, of the world so described. In The Fashion

System, Barthes (1967/1983) put it this way:

> Hence, the semantic analysis of written clothing [read "materials"] must be pursued in depth when it attempts to "unravel" the systems, and in breadth when it attempts to analyze the succession of signs, at each level of these systems. (p. 26)

The meaning may be understood as the product of the process(es) of symbolization achieved by a structure and formulation of rules. These rules or formations convert, as it were, "raw form" or most basic (deepest) concept to more complex form or forms. The more complex forms, in turn, take on functions that are multidimensional as they intrude, from depth to surface, into the cultural and social life of human beings at any juncture in time. Moreover, any already formally complex symbolic form or meaning spreads out and interlaces, as it were, with other meanings across the length and breadth of the culture and society. Each meaning, as it becomes more and more inextricably bound to the whole, takes on more symbolic, weblike communicative complexity at each level of language, culture, and society. This is, precisely, the notion that what must result is a simulacrum or image of the thing or entity described and, as I mentioned above, the simulacrum emerges in the richness of the "semiome."

"Wool" is wool, so to speak, until rules that govern how that material may be used in the construction of apparel, how it is to be understood in terms of its material properties, how it is to be referred to and negotiated linguistically, apply to it formally;

then it is no longer wool alone but "woolen garment" with, let us say, the properties of being able to protect the human body from adverse degrees of cold. However, "woolen garment" is, across culture and society, much more than apparel alone. It is an item with symbolic and communicative function. It is an entity that implies meaning and from which meaning can be inferred.

In the implying and inferring, the already more complex meaning of, let us say, "garment made of Welsh flannel," is infused with ever more complex meanings far beyond the original, basic form and function. Out of the semiome emerges a simulacrum; taken together, they constitute, a s Barthes might say, a **semiotic** of the life of and in the culture. It is precisely in this semiotic connection that such an analysis as this, grounded in disciplines as seemingly diverse as costume history and textile chemistry, on the one hand, and history, sociology, literature study, and linguistics, on the other, bears the communicative fruits that may be observed. If one construes the 28 plays examined in this study to be symbolic of the intentions of Shakespeare with regard to the events and persons in his world, the meaning, "the picture," that the consummate reader or actor of the plays gets communicated is idiosyncratic and parochial but also clarifies and reveals that world, its people, and its events. The semiome having been constituted, the image which refractively emerges is, essentially, a simulacrum of Shakespeare's world; it is, in that refraction, as close or as far as we may approach, via the language of the Bard, what his world might have been or how he understood, perceived,

lived in, or reacted communicatively to it.

In the 1992 study and often elsewhere, I utilized a synthesis of the concepts and insights relating to **foregrounding** (as devised in Harris, 1981). It is important to describe and clarify the underlying linguistic process that allows a communicator such as Shakespeare to decide upon, form a structure, and apply it, or allows a communicator such as a reader to understand, analyze, and apply that structure in the language of the Bard's plays. In any piece of discourse, the communicator signals the intention of bringing some element of information into prominence, that is to say, the information is "foregrounded." Although apparently transparent to the language-user, foregrounding comes about as the result of a deep and complex linguistic process. Metaphors are, in fact, products of such a deep linguistic process. A communicator marks an element, emphasizes it, stresses it, or contrasts it by manipulating various linguistic structures or devices. Other elements are systematically backgrounded or disappear from the discourse entirely.

After Chafe (1976), we may say that switching from an active to a passive form in a relatively basic sentence such as "Tom kicked Harry" to "Harry was kicked by Tom" or "Harry was kicked," thereby changing the emphasis from Tom to Harry, is an example of the foregrounding phenomenon. The sentence, "It was Harry whom Tom kicked," is another example of the phenomenon of foregrounding. Chafe observed that foregrounding and backgrounding constructions are concerned principally with how the communicator presents

certain information to the audience, thereby altering the meaning or significance of that information. This choice of language construction reveals an intention or decision, contrary to usual expectations, on the part of the communicator and is at the heart of the notion of foregrounding. Moreover, it is not only a linguistic process used by a communicator to mark or emphasize some entity. It is, as well, a heuristic device that may be used for disambiguating and understanding how or what some linguistic entity may represent.

As Kenneth Pike (1975) wrote, "A crucial characteristic of human nature is our ability to select and guide into attention almost anything that we please" (p. 27). Essentially, then, foregrounding is a symbolic language process of establishing significance or special prominence to intentions or decisions of a communicator in the application of structure. As well, it allows the interpreter a heuristic means of understanding a communication. By means of various language forms, the communicator decides to mark, emphasize, stress, compare, or contrast in a significant way, and this information alone is, in the application, conveyed to the addressee (Cf. Harris, 1981).

In examining the process of foregrounding with regard to the selected plays of William Shakespeare, I attempt to see how the manipulation and use of elements or forms in discourse alter the relative prominence of those elements and forms. In other words, there is an attempt to reveal by a careful, strict linguistic analysis the degree, type, and extent of meaningfulness conveyed by

either the direct (literal) or metaphoric (figurative) use of language as applied and referring to textiles in these plays and what, then, may be construed symbolically as the actual meaning of those references in the plays (**Cf.** as well, Harris & Owens, 1990).

We selected for further analysis examples that were direct, that is to say, indicators of the actual, literal function of the textile material and that function alone, and those that were metaphoric or indirect in nature, indicators of a secondary, figurative, transformative meaning which can only be understood by drawing analogues and relationships with the direct meaning. We first selected a term such as velvet, obviously the material itself and only that item, and provided a primary definition for velvet within the confines of the plays (for example, the description of Tranio's apparel as "A silken doublet, a velvet hose, a scarlet cloak, and a copatain hat!" [The Taming of the Shrew, V, i, 66-67]). If velvet also referred to some metaphoric and symbolic meaning, as in "And thou the velvet--thou art good velvet; thou'rt a three-pil'd piece, I warrant thee. I had as lief be a list of an English kersey as be pil'd, as thou art pil'd, for a French velvet." (Measure for Measure, I, ii, 31-34), it then became, in light of the foregrounding concept, a principal subject of analysis.

In order for an interpretation to occur, in both the 1990 and 1992 studies, the items chosen for discussion are quoted in the discourse context in which each appears. Then a definition, an analysis, and a discussion of the item in that exemplifying context

is provided. Those items used in a direct, non-metaphoric sense are designated [D]; those used in an indirect, metaphoric sense, [InD]. All quotations from the plays were taken from The Riverside Shakespeare (Evans, 1974). Here is an example:

bombast [InD] "But he (as loving his own pride and purposes)
Evades them with a bumbast circumstance
Horribly stuff'd with epithites of war, . . ."
(Othello, I, i, 12-14)

[InD] "We have receiv'd your letters full of love;
Your favors, embassadors of love;
And in our maiden council rated them
At courtship, pleasant jest, and courtesy,
As bombast and as lining to the time; . . ."
(Love's Labor's Lost, V, ii, 777-781)

As far as can be ascertained, this is the origin of the modern term for inflated or turgid language or behavior. In the Bard's time the practice of stuffing bombast into garments, although ostensibly to smoothe out creases and folds, became an aristocratic fad. Lords used bombast to increase the size of the chest and hips and to make the waist, which was also laced, appear smaller. They achieved, thereby, a silhouette that approximated the clothed feminine shape of the time (Laver, 1969). The notion of "puffery" was complete, therefore, in that bombast referred both to materials of little value, such as horsehair, rags, flock, cotton, bran, and the like, which were used to stuff garments such as doublets, pumpkin breeches, venetians, or trunk hose until they appeared

balloon-like (Bigelow, 1970; Evans & Evans, 1978; Laver, 1969) and to inflated or padded-out language and behavior.

What emerges in the figurative, indirect ([InD]) quotations above is somewhat different from the meanings that emerge from the literal, direct ([D]) quotations in the text. Barthes (1967/1983) asserted that languages, which are primarily social, have connotations (and we may understand these to be, in this case, metaphors) wherein a literal message supports affective meaning:

> . . . the phenomena of connotation are certainly of great though as yet unrecognized importance in all the languages of culture and in literature in particular. (p. 28)

By melding together the labeled definitions of terms referring to textiles ([D]) and the metaphoric uses of those terms ([InD]) and by utilizing the foregrounding framework to perform comparison and contrast, the result is a synthesis that serves as a communicative filter for an interpretation of the items referring to textiles in the plays. This interpretation reveals the underlying mechanisms and the underlying meaningfulness of the discourse.

The claim here is that this interpretation does not arise from any bias, save a phenomenological one, but, rather, arises from the discourse itself; what is elicited from the written text of the plays follows closely the processes of foregrounding (backgrounding) as outlined by the examples, discussion, and explication as presented. Revealed firstly is a meaningfulness that is wrought from the decisions of the playwright, Shakespeare,

to choose and, thereby, to manipulate linguistic structures in a foregrounding and concomitantly backgrounding manner. Revealed secondly is a meaningfulness that is wrought from the intent of the Bard to convey, by the application of the structures, a precise message. The symbolic whole of the event, the simulacrum, emerges out of the semiome of that meaningfulness and is revealed refractivley by the interpretation of the discourse of the selected plays.

This approach is not simply the product of the "perfect 20/20 vision" of historical hindsight. Subsequent phenomena and events in the plays validate, verify, and corroborate the interpretation that the foregrounding framework provides and the simulacrum that semiotically emerges. These are of two forms: (a) Shakespeare reutilizes and manipulates similar devices often in other sections of the same written discourse (the plays) and the same kinds of metaphors emerge repeatedly, and (b) historically verifiable events, actions, and behaviors reflect and correlate with the interpretations construed from the metaphors in the written text of these plays.

In The Fashion System (1967/1983), Barthes suggested the nature of the symbol or semiotic that would result. He said that utterances regarding apparel [read "material"] involve both a linguistic system and a vestimentary system according to which the garment [textile] signifies the world. What emerges is the semiotic and symbolic nature of the meaning of the plays in relation to the events and the people acting within those events.

It is a refractive semiotic composite that reveals, microcosmically, an aspect of the world of the Bard and, macrocosmically, the symbol or simulacrum of what William Shakespeare and his contemporaries were within the cultural perspective of the English-speaking peoples. What we witness with either the literal and direct or the figurative, indirect, and metaphoric use of textile terms is the actual underlying meaning--a meaning that is not necessarily conveyed in the surface language of the plays.

In discussing the above, I have achieved a good degree of observational and descriptive adequacy with regard to what I, as an applied communication theorist primarily concerned with a semiotics of language and linguistics, have been engaged in the last several years. Moreover, there is more than a minimal degree of explanatory adequacy with regard to how I view the nature and import of my work in semiotics and its application in studies on communication. Finally, there is a fair amount of suasiveness conveyed to you, I hope with great facundity, in communicating how I think what I have doing linguistically, communicatively, and semiotically marks and promotes the case for endeavors toward greater synthesis within and for the field of communication and, more particularly, the sub-field of language behavior and social interaction.

Such a demonstration as the realtively narrow and limited one above suggests that what is needed, more and more, again and again, in the communication field is a synthesis that comes willy-nilly

from adopting and adapting to, from applying, the semiotic perspective. Certainly it is the case that interest in the study of semiotics has grown considerably over the last thirty years. Both international and national associations for semiotics are well established and accompanying refereed journals regularly appear. With ever more frequency, reference to semiotics is made in, or serves as the basis for, both articles and books within the field of communication. Given the importance in rhetorical studies, in communication theory, in language and linguistic studies, in the interpretation of literature, and in literature in performance of the understanding of the nature and stuff of human events and how the meaning of that stuff and those events is communicated, the relationship of semiotics to the field of communication has become clear. In short, a semiotics of communication as a whole, not only within language behavior and social interaction, informs in a rich way every aspect of the discipline of communication.

The semiotic approach allows for a politics of synthesis that promises to revitalize every aspect and every investigation in the field of communication. It suggests to me that such studies as conversational analysis (CA) are, from a semiotic perspective, models of conversational dynamism and a means of understanding aspects of a social, communicative semiotic. As a example of this, one might cite one from amongst the many gems in this literature a study such as Wayne Beach's "Intercultural problems in courtroom interaction" (1991). Taking this study as exemplar, it must be convincingly argued that CA is not in the slightest, as it has

sometimes been maligned, an empty methodological shell; it is, from a phenomenal, semiotic, communicative point of view, rather, a rich and intense catalogue, the semiome, of part of the "dance" of the human communicative process.

Semiotically viewed, CA provides significant communities of related and well-developed signs, the semiome, that allow for the emergence of a refracted image, the simulacrum, of communicative events that I alluded to above. Discourse analysis, viewed not solely as appartaus, becomes, therefore, a analysis of the human social process prompted by and prompting a complex of signs--a social, communicative, applied semiotic. In much the same way, <u>all</u> the subdisciplines of communication may benefit from the semiotic perspective. For us students of communication, a better and deeper understanding of how the semiotic approach informs and, as well, is informed by our discipline is an imperative; moreover, the semiotic approach mandates a politics of synthesis, inter- and intradisciplinarily, that allows for an ever more coherent level of analysis of the meaning, function, effects, applications, and significance of the phenomena of human communication.

ACH. February 18, 1992.

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